

6.3 DOCUMENT BASED EXERCISE

MUCKRAKERS

Task: Look at Documents 1, 2, and 3 and answer their accompanying questions. Then, use the documents and your knowledge of history to complete this writing assignment:

Write an essay about the muckrakers of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Be sure to identify the different muckrakers and to describe their goals and accomplishments. Include information about how they got their name.

Document 1:

The excerpt below is from journalist Ida Tarbell's History of the Standard Oil Company. What does Tarbell say is the goal of a trust? She was talking about the goal of a trust is to help out all of the companies that was in the the trust. Some companies had steel or iron for parts. Some other companies like the oil company had oil witch was made into gas or energy for machines.

"Standard Oil Trust is the most perfectly developed trust in existence; that is, it satisfies most nearly the trust ideal of entire control of the commodity in which it deals. Its vast profits have led its officers into various allied interests, such as railroads, shipping, gas, copper, iron, steel, as well as into banks and trust companies.... It has led in the struggle against legislation directed against combinations. Its power in state and Federal government, in the press, in the college, in the pulpit, is generally recognized."

Document 2:

In How the Other Half Lives, Jacob Riis called attention to the misery of tenement living. What aspect of tenement living is Riis describing in this excerpt? He is talking about bigger family's needs bigger houses. They needed bigger houses because then they had room to move around and did not have to sleep 3 or 4 to a bed.

"It is said that nowhere in the world are so many people crowded together on a square mile as here.... In this house... there were fifty-eight babies and thirty-eight children that were over five years of age. In Essex Street, two small rooms in a six-story tenement were made to hold a "family" of father and mother, twelve children, and six boarders. These are samples of the packing of the population that has run up the record here to the rate of three hundred and thirty thousand per square mile.

The densest crowding of Old London... never got beyond a hundred and seventy-five thousand. Even the alley is crowded out. Through dark hallways and filthy cellars, crowded, as is every foot of the street, with dirty children, the settlements in the rear are reached."

Document 3:

In *The Jungle*, Upton Sinclair exposes the atrocities of the meat-packing industry. In the excerpt below, what aspect of industry is the focus? They are talking about wool pluckers and people who made tin cans for meat. The aspect they both have in their hands are getting all torn up for their job.

“There were the wool-pluckers, whose hands went to pieces even sooner than the hands of the pickle men; for the pelts of the sheep had to be painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off. There were those who made the tins for the canned meat; and their hands, too, were a maze of cuts, and each cut represented a chance for blood poisoning. Some worked at the stamping machines, and it was very seldom that one could work long there at the pace that was set, and not give out and forget himself and have a part of his hand chopped off. There were the “hoisters,” as they were called, whose task it was to press the lever which lifted the dead cattle off the floor. They ran along upon a rafter, peering down through the damp and the steam; and as old Durham’s architects had not built the killing room for the convenience of the hoisters, at every few feet they would have to stoop under a beam, say four feet above the one they ran on; which got them into the habit of stooping, so that in a few years they would be walking like chimpanzees.”

Write your essay here. Remember, all essays need to have a thesis, supporting statements/ paragraphs, and a conclusion.

The muckraker most associated with a group of American investigative reporters, novelists and critics from the late 1800s to early 1900s, who investigated and exposed societal issues such as conditions in slums and prisons, factories, insane asylums, sweatshops, mines, child labor and unsanitary conditions in food processing plants.